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ISIS RECRUITMENT FROM THE SOUTH CAUCASUS: THE CASE OF GEORGIA

Abstract

The Islamic State of Iraq and Levant is the most discussed terrorist organization of our days and has reached new levels recently. With the evolution of the organization many foreign fighters have been attracted to join the ranks of ISIS. This research concentrates on the case of recruitment of new fighters from Georgia and tries to give answers to how and why some Georgian citizens from some regions are becoming part of the Islamic State. The sources covered have showed that the recruitment processes taking place in the region of Pankisi Gorge carry both online and face-to-face characters. The population of the Pankisi Gorge is an easy target for the ISIS; Chechen fighters, Kists (Muslim Georgians) and young men from poor families are included in the targeted population of the IS. The analyses made show that there are both religious and socio-economic reasons for the Georgian citizens from this region to decide in favor of joining ISIS: feeling vulnerable as religious minorities under Orthodox church, eliminations of justice, earning money and becoming a hero. Considering the importance of the issue of terrorism, the research also includes a section on how the Georgian government deals with the external and internal threats of terrorism.

Keywords: *Georgia, terrorism, ISIS, recruitment, Pankisi Gorge.*

Introduction

Terrorism has reached new levels since the eruption of Syrian war in 2011. This event led to the development of a new terrorist organization – the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (Syria) (ISIS/ISIL), or Daesh (داعش) in Arabic, fighters of which have been carrying out terrorist attacks all over the world. The organization is actively popularizing the ideas of the recreation of the Caliphate. With these ideas of propaganda, the Islamic State started its recruitment process from around the world.

Taking into consideration how rapid the ISIS has been developing in its numbers, the importance of studying such a topic is indisputable in today's reality. Since the ranks of ISIS have been covering even

more diverse nationalities, it is now important to determine how exactly the members of ISIS join the organization, how the propaganda is run and which are the main locations that are under the attention of ISIS recruitment.

The topic is not of a less importance for Armenia as well: it is important to understand how active the recruitment processes in South Caucasus are to determine the level of threat for the country. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union Armenia has been in the situation of geographical and geopolitical blockade and its only way or “window” to Europe has been neighboring Georgia. However, recent news, statements by world officials and the IS members themselves as well as official and unofficial statistics have shown that the Islamic State has been finding new potential members to recruit from Georgia, hence studying the issue of ISIS recruitment at the example of Georgia carries big importance for Armenia as a matter of security, it will raise awareness and help get prepared for the possible upcoming threats.

It needs to be mentioned that due to being a relatively new issue and due to the secret nature of this topic, there have been some limitations and difficulties in finding relevant data for further research. The sources used include scholarly articles, media, ISIS press and analyses of documents. The limitations of the study are the time limitations, secret nature of the topic and some information possibly lost in translations.

Literature Review

There have been many studies on the Islamic State, however there have been not so many researchers conducted on issues connected with the recruitment of ISIS, especially in regards to Georgia. Still, some scholars have covered the issue of foreign fighters in this terrorist organization, through analyses of motives, incentives, tactics and the life after being recruited. The majority of the scholars have come to the conclusions that the main ways of luring foreigners to becoming an ISIS fighter lies in their online propaganda and “attraction” through social media. Some scholars, on the other hand, try to explain the attraction of foreigners to fight for ISIS through their

personal characteristics, which is education, socio-economic position, welfare, etc¹.

The number of foreign fighters in ISIS varies in every study. In fact, these numbers vary from 10,000 to, in some cases, 60,000 people². This difference in data can be explained by the fact that the actual numbers are kept in secrecy³.

Scholars Charlie Winter and Tiffany Tse underline the importance of online recruitment and propaganda in getting foreigners to become IS fighters. Winter builds his study around the “three mechanisms of recruitment: echo chamber, propaganda and enlistment”⁴. He gives explanations of each phase, thus making the procedure of ISIS recruitment look smooth and organized. Tiffany Tse’s work also includes a research on the main characteristics, based on which the potential ISIS fighters are being chosen by the ISIS itself: gender (10% of fighters are women), geography, religion, and socioeconomic status of the person⁵. Goguadze and Kapanadze on their turn add to the importance of bad socio-economic factor, by saying that “lack of proper education allows spread of fundamentalist-radical ideas”⁶. They bring the example of Georgian families in the region of Pankisi Gorge, that are in better economic conditions because of having a family member fighting in the ranks of ISIS.

Many authors have also concentrated on the issue of recruiting women and children to the ranks of IS fighters. Such authors as

¹Winter C., An integrated approach to Islamic State recruitment, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 25.05.2016, <https://www.aspi.org.au/report/integrated-approach-islamic-state-recruitment>

²ISIS Foreign Fighters: Which Countries Do They Come From?, Retrieved January 15, 2017, <http://time.com/4739488/isis-iraq-syria-tunisia-saudi-arabia-russia/>

³Kirk A., Iraq and Syria: How many foreign fighters are fighting for Isil? The Telegraph, 29.03. 2016, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/03/29/iraq-and-syria-how-many-foreign-fighters-are-fighting-for-isil/>

⁴Ibid

⁵Tse T., (2016) ISIS and Recruitment: How Do Demographics Play a Role? Carnegie Mellon University.

⁶Goguadze, G. and Kapanadze S., Daesh and Challenges Facing Georgia. Georgia’s Reforms Associates (GRASS) Policy Document, 25.11. 2015, <http://grass.org.ge/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Daesh-and-Challenges-Facing-Georgia.pdf>

Anderson, Azzam, and an article published by the General Intelligence and Security Service of the Ministry of Interior and Kingdom Relations (The Netherlands), also address the importance of studying the issue of women and children recruitment in Daesh. The authors have concluded, that women should “recruit new women, bear many children to populate the organization, carry out punishments and get trained to use weaponry (limited use)”⁷. Children, on the other hand, should “witness atrocities, take regular jihad lessons along with regular education; boys should get trained from the age of nine, while at this same age girls should start wearing veils”⁸. There are some claims that women do not undergo the same procedures of being chosen as the men usually do, and they are expected to give birth to as many children as possible to enlarge the number of ISIS fighters. While talking about children recruitment, some authors claim that there are two ways of recruiting children: voluntarily and involuntarily⁹. The former is being carried out through propaganda in public places or luring with toys, while the latter includes such atrocities as kidnapping. The author also states that the recruitment of children, like the adult recruitment, is not solely from the Middle East: many children are being brought to ISIS from Western countries as well¹⁰.

Some authors address another aspect of recruitment – psychological pressure and working with the potential recruit face to face. Anaya, Azzam and a Final Report of The Task Force on Combating Terrorist And Foreign Fighter Travel (U.S. Department of Homeland Security)

⁷Life with ISIS: the Myth Unravelling, General Intelligence and Security Service, 2016, https://english.nctv.nl/binaries/Life%20with%20ISIS%20-%20the%20Myth%20Unravelling_tcm32-90366.pdf

⁸Ibid.

⁹Azzam C., Australian Foreign Fighters: The Long Reach of the Syrian Conflict, A Journal of The International Centre For Political Violence and Terrorism Research, Volume 6, Issue 9, October 2014, pp. 9-13, <https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/CTTA-October14.pdf>

Anderson K., “Cubs of the Caliphate” The Systematic Recruitment, Training, and Use of Children in the Islamic State, 2016, <http://www.drake.edu/media/departments/offices/international/nelson/2016%20paper%20Children%20in%20ISIS,%20K.%20Anderson.pdf>

¹⁰Ibid

have addressed this issue, saying that the face-to-face recruitment affects the mental condition of the recruit and makes him believe that the recruiter standing in front of him is talking about justice and peace. They also claim that the majority of the recruits are being affected by the idea of “living in a Caliphate” and how prestigious and prosperous the life in that case would be¹¹. Kala Kristina Hartman Anaya in her “Persuasion Strategies in Terrorist Recruitment: The Case of ISIS” argues that the IS recruiters use the “shaming tactics” to affect the minds of future recruits¹². This “shaming tactic” plays on the ideas that “their brother Muslims are fighting for justice, it is everyone’s duty to help them in their fight and they serve their ideas as “enlightenment, inner peace and spiritual awareness”¹³.

A few authors have also conducted research on the issue of ISIS recruitment specifically from Georgia. They all have one strong similarity: all of the authors think of the region of Pankisi Gorge as of the biggest threat in the region, since exactly its locals are more likely to leave for ISIS in large numbers. Authors that cover the issue of foreign fighters’ outflow from Georgia claim that the outflow of young people from Georgia is easier than from any other remote countries, due to the fact that Turkey (through where they actually travel to Syria or Iraq) is weakly controlled in that sense¹⁴. Some scholars also underline the importance of Russian involvement in regards to this issue, saying that nowadays, the Russian presence has risen so much that “Russian has become the third language of Daesh”¹⁵. These authors emphasize the region of Adjara as well,

¹¹Final Report of the Task Force on Combating Terrorist and Foreign Fighter Travel. (2015). Homeland Security Committee, <https://homeland.house.gov/task-force-on-terrorist-and-foreign-fighter-travel/>

¹²Hartman Anaya K., *Persuasion Strategies in Terrorist Recruitment: The Case of ISIS*, Leiden University, 2015, <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/bitstream/handle/1887/35008/Masters%20Thesis%20PDF.pdf?sequence=1>

¹³Ibid

¹⁴Gogvadze G. and Kapanadze S., op. cit.

¹⁵Lang H. and Al Wari M., *The Flow of Foreign Fighters to the Islamic State Assessing the Challenge and the Response*, Centre for American Progress, March 2016, <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/17132821/ForeignFighters-report.pdf>

taking into consideration the Muslim population of Adjara and their recruitment.

Nearly all authors have stressed out the importance of the threat of returnees. According to the studies examined, the threat of returning fighters is an actual issue nowadays, since the foreign fighters are being lured by the ideas of Caliphate, are being taught the tactics and then, after returning to their countries of origin, they represent a threat of carrying out terrorist attacks in those remote territories (Europe, Australia, Asia¹⁶). Moreover, nearly all authors claim that the brutal videos posted by the organization online are a special force for affecting the minds of future recruits.

The common grounds that the scholars have agreed upon include the strength of ISIS online propaganda, which is the most efficient tool for recruiting new fighters, the dissemination of the propaganda and the threat of returning fighters. The articles also studied focus on the threats caused by such worldwide recruitment, especially when new fighters are being picked from women or children from different countries of the world.

Methodology

This research paper mainly uses qualitative approach, focusing on literature review and analysis of press and articles. A part of this work examines the main tendencies of ISIS recruitment as a whole, covered by literature and scholarly articles, while the other half is concentrated on the issue of the recruitment from Georgian regions. International and ISIS press and media articles, as well as some documents that tackle the issue of Georgian IS fighters and steps against this threat, have been used as sources to base the analyses on. During the research, ISIS press and videos were studied and examined in the scope of the topic of the research. Addressing the issue of how the local government deals or tries to deal with the problem, Georgian National Security Strategy and media were examined, as well as Georgia's annual reports on terrorism to the Bureau of Counterterrorism

¹⁶Azzam, C., op. cit.

and Countering Violent Extremism of the U.S. Department of State of the years of 2014, 2015 and 2016¹⁷.

The main purpose of this study is to analyze both the reasons for Georgian citizens to join ISIS and the methods of the recruitment; hence the paper will try to give answers to the following questions: a) What are the peculiarities of the ISIS recruitment process in Georgia?; b) Why do Georgian citizens choose to join the Islamic State? Based on the covered literature and documents, the following hypothesis have been formulated: a) Numerous Georgian citizens are leaving Georgia to fight in the ranks of ISIS. b) Georgian citizens from Pankisi Gorge are driven by economic, social and psychological motives to join ISIS.

Manifestations of Radical Islam in Georgia

Even though Islam in Georgia dates back to the early history, the year 2011 can be considered as a year of change in the history of Islam in Georgia. That year the state adopted a “new legislative amendment into the country’s civil code stating that religious minority groups with “historic ties to Georgia” or those defined as religions by members of the Council of Europe can register as legal entities of public law”¹⁸. Whether coincidental or not, this is the year of the start of the Arab Spring and drastic enlargement of the Daesh. With its development, the Islamic State started its active propaganda to lure as many new members from around the world as possible.

Until the time that the Georgian government started to assess the Muslim communities of the country as a state-level issue, these minorities had been being supported by Turkish side, and, evidently, did not enjoy freedom of expression much; despite the existence of some mosques in Georgia, the minority group felt “vulnerable” and “unconsidered”¹⁹.

¹⁷Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe. (n.d.). Retrieved March 1, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2016/272231.htm>

¹⁸Georgia Adopts Law on the Status of Religious Minorities. (2011). CRRC. Retrived March 1, 2017, <http://crrc-caucasus.blogspot.am/2011/07/georgia-adopts-law-on-status-of.html>

¹⁹Baramidze R., Islamic State and Georgia's Muslim Community. The Heinrich Boell Foundation, 17.06.2017, http://ge.boell.org/en/2015/06/17/islamic-state-and-georgias-muslim-community#_ftn1

Some parts of the Muslim minorities of Georgia have supported one of the main goals of the Islamic State that is changing the world order in its structure. In a short term many representatives of Georgian youth from some regions started to feel the need to stand among the Jihadi fighters. Muslim youth of Georgia, unsatisfied with the social and legal condition they had been put in the state, “dissatisfied with existing traditional norms, viewing various threats and searching for various methods for eliminating injustice, including radical ones”²⁰ started to adjoin the Islamic State. These claims were later proved to be true based on the interviews conducted with the citizens living in Pankisi Gorge²¹. The above-mentioned factors contributed to the involvement of the ISIS recruitment processes from Georgia.

Reasons to become an IS fighter for Georgian citizens

As the literature studied suggests, the socio-economic background of a person plays a big role in the recruitment process, some connect it with education, others with the perception of Islam as a whole. The case of Georgians is not an exception. The young men, who flee their country in order to fight in Syria, also have their personal motives to act so. However, while the majority of the literature covered proposed that young men mostly from poor families choose to join ISIS in order to financially help their families, case studies in Georgia show that this is not necessarily true. As different interviews by BBC or CNN show the two main driving forces are the “desire to become a hero” and “radical islamization”²².

As mentioned earlier the rising interest in joining ISIS can be also explained by rising dissatisfaction of being a minority and being a part of Christian Orthodox society. Since Daesh is actively promoting Islam and urging the Muslims to stop living under the rule of “infidels”, they become the ray of hope for Georgian Muslims to fight for their religion and get rid of the Christian governance. ISIS Georgian members themselves have underlined the importance of

²⁰Ibid

²¹Demytrie R., Jihadist shadow hangs over Georgia's Pankisi Gorge, 21.04.2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36035312>

²²Gogvadze G. and Kapanadze S., op. cit.

following the organization and urged young men of Pankisi Gorge to join them: “Oh, my Muslim brothers, know that you are forbidden to live with the kafirs [infidels]”²³.

Today the data on the size of the ISIS fighters from Georgia varies. The official position of Georgia is that only approximately 100 Georgians are fighting in the ranks of ISIS²⁴. However, the videos by ISIS fighters try to show that the number is much larger.

Recruitment processes in Georgia

Since the literature and scholarly articles address the main methods ISIS uses to recruit new members, local press is more accurate on what’s concerning specifically the case of recruitment from Georgia (numbers, specifics, etc.). As a Georgian newspaper “Rezonansi” reports, Georgia today plays a role of a “transit country for ISIS militants, and terrorist attacks are not ruled out on the territory of the country”²⁵. The valley of Pankisi Gorge is most frequently seen in any news piece or articles that concern IS fighters of Georgia. Located in the Northern part of Georgia, Pankisi is close to Chechnya and the population of Pankisi Gorge, along with the so-called Kists (Muslim Georgians), is also comprised of Chechen fighters who fought against Russia in Chechen wars²⁶. Having such backgrounds, the militants are an easy target to be recruited to fight for the Islamic State. Some scholars have expressed their ideas of the correlation between anti-Russian attitudes and recruitment. In their understanding, the recruiters often use Russia as leverage for waking up the spirit of revenge.

²³Soon there will be time of beheading you - Video address to Georgians released on behalf of Islamic State. Retrieved March, 2017, <http://www.georgianjournal.ge/society/31860-soon-there-will-be-time-of-beheading-you-video-address-to-georgians-released-on-behalf-of-islamic-state.html>

²⁴Mardasov, A. Georgia - A Transit Corridor for ISIS?, 28.06.2016, Forth Russ. <http://www.fort-russ.com/2016/06/georgia-transit-corridor-for-isis.html>

²⁵Ibid

²⁶Burchuladze N., The So-called Caucasian Governance of the Islamic State has a New Emir. Georgia: Georgian Journal, 31.07.2015, <http://www.georgianjournal.ge/military/31138-the-so-called-caucasian-governance-of-the-islamic-state-has-a-new-emir.html>

Press at times publishes news about detainment or sentencing of ISIS fighters of Georgian origin. On June 2015 a piece of news was spread all over Georgia that four people had been detained because of being related to the Islamic State. News like this only proves that the recruitment process of new young fighters from Georgia was in an active phase at that period. ISIS even uploaded and spread a video message, in which four jihadi fighters with the ISIS black flag were addressing their fellow Muslim brothers to join them in their “fight for justice”²⁷. As it turns out from their speech, all four of them are Kists and have left Pankisi to start fighting in Syria.

In 2015 Huffington Post published an article, with pictures and short biographies on world’s five most wanted Jihadists²⁸. Among those was Tarkhan Batirashvili. He is also known as Omar the Chechen or Abu Omar al-Shishani. Omar the Chechen was a former officer at the Georgian Army and he also fought during the Chechen war against Russia. He is believed to have recruited tens of young Georgians from Pankisi Gorge. The influence and the position of Omar the Chechen within the ISIS only proves that the Muslim Georgian population of Pankisi Gorge play important role in the formation of ISIS foreign fighters.

On the other hand, some recruiters were actually based in the region and were recruiting on ground through using their power. During some interviews conducted in the region, the locals talked about mosques that were being opened rapidly all over the region and the propaganda of Arabic language in these mosques – all the attendants could study Arabic without any fees. The mosques and the language classes are of a concern for local people, who are unaware of where the funding of such endeavors comes from²⁹. The issue of funding is deeper than it may seem from the first sight: if considered

²⁷Civil Georgia (2015, November 23). Islamic State Group, Georgian-Language Propaganda Video Emerges. Retrieved January 09, 2018, from <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=28796>

²⁸Tarabay J, These Are The World's 5 Most Wanted ISIS Jihadists, 27.06.2015, https://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/06/27/isis-most-wanted-jihadist_n_7673466.html

²⁹Demytrie R., Jihadist shadow hangs over Georgia's Pankisi Gorge. BBC News, 21.04.2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36035312>

that the funding goes from the Islamic State itself, it becomes clear that the whole activities carried out under this funding are exceptionally aimed at recruiting and luring more and more perspective young fighters to their ranks. If so, by funding construction of mosques or Arabic language lessons, the ISIS leaders not only assure successful recruitment process here, but also secure that the new members of the organization are well educated in the religious sense.

While talking about the mosques and propaganda, one name should not be escaped mentioning - Aiuf Borchashvili – an imam in the village of Jokolo of Pankisi region. He, using his privileges as the imam, was helping young men from Pankisi to join fight in Syria and then was sentenced to 14 years for this in 2015 ³⁰.

Today, the region of Pankisi Gorge is still serving as a platform for ISIS to recruit new young and fresh forces and minds. However, Georgian Government is today taking steps in order to at least lessen the numbers of its citizens that fight for ISIS, to not let more outflows from its regions.

Steps against terrorism

Having such outflows of young Georgian citizens to terrorist organizations could not but be a concern for the local government. Latest two versions of National Security Strategy documents of Georgia have always included special points that were dedicated to underlining the importance of the issue of terrorism and of the fight against it.

Issue of Terrorism In NSS documents of Georgia

The national security strategy documents of Georgia have tackled the matter of terrorism many times. The last amendments of national security document of Georgia were made in 2011, which explains why these amendments did not cover the matter of threat from the Islamic State and it's recruitment, however the document covers the matters of regional security. And even though the importance of fight against external forces in occupied territories is mentioned several times

³⁰Ibid.

throughout the document, it here does not refer to the territories of Pankisi or Adjara, but the ones there were “occupied” by Russia in the August War of 2008. The document mentions that these regions now serve as a convenient platform for transnational organized crime and transfer of terrorists³¹.

Even before the issue of ISIS recruitment from Georgia reached its peak, the phenomenon of terrorism was included in its NSS documents. Considering that the document is 27 pages long, having terrorism mentioned 29 times is quite enough to claim that even in the days when ISIS was not yet recruiting from Georgia, the issue of terrorism still highly bothered the government.

The document also mentions that the government of Georgia "actively cooperates with the UN counterterrorism committee and strengthens the means to fight terrorism including the Armed Forces and the special forces of the law enforcement agencies"³². This is also a weighty fact in defense to the Georgian Government's activeness towards solving or trying to solve the problem of uprising terrorism.

The annual reports of countries to the Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism under the U.S. Department of State also include ones about Georgia. Since the years 2014 and 2015 were harsh in the sense of the activities carried out by ISIS, the Georgian annual reports were concentrated on ISIS, its enlargements and steps to be taken to fight it.

Georgia's Country Report of 2014 of the US DS

International media had many times touched upon the Georgian citizens being recruited by the Islamic State, when Georgian government started its way towards fighting the spread of international terrorism in Georgia in 2014. That's when the Georgian government announced to be “committed to provide humanitarian

³¹National Security Concept of Georgia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Georgia, 2011, <http://www.mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/ForeignPolicy/NationalSecurityConcept.aspx?lang=en-US>

³²Ibid.

support as part of Georgia's contribution to and membership of the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL”³³.

According to the report, the Georgian Government took steps both on the international arena and on the level of country's legislature. The amendments in laws were addressed towards strengthening the counterterrorism fight in Georgia and to ban, on a state level, any propaganda or recruitment of ISIS³⁴. Moreover, the Georgian Bureau of Investigation established the Counter Terrorism Task force, which was aimed at creating “a state-level protective-security/rapid-reaction task force”³⁵. This body is supposed to rapidly react to any kind of threat or supposed threat of terrorist act, as well as to prevent further development of the recruitment from the regions of Georgia.

Importance is also given to the financing of the terrorist organization, which, according to the report, Georgian government counts as equal of a crime as being an actual member of an organization. That is why, the state during these years joined international organizations that concentrate on fighting against financing terrorist organizations. These organizations include the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL) and Financial Action Task Force (FATF)³⁶.

Since terrorism is a matter of concern for many countries of the world, there have been some regional counterterrorism organizations created, a member of which Georgia also is. The Georgian government has been expressing its attitude towards terrorism and their actions towards helping the counterterrorism organizations through annual reports to the U.S. Department of State.

³³Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe Overview, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239406.htm>

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵Investigation Division, Counterterrorism Task Force, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, <https://investigative-gbi.georgia.gov/counter-terrorism-task-force>

³⁶Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe Overview, 2014, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239406.htm>

Georgia's Country Report of 2015 of the US DS

The following year's report also included the new steps that Georgia had been taking during the previous year. As the government of Georgia claims in this report, there had been taken many steps in the direction of securing Georgia's borders from not only any foreign threat, but for eliminating the chance of illegal transfer of people or future terrorists. Georgia started to concentrate more on the document security, especially on borders with Turkey, to ensure that travelling with fake documents (what recruits always used) was not possible. Considering the geographic position of Georgia and Turkey, the threat of the movement of terrorists could also be posed from the side of the sea (water transportation). This is why, as the report claims, "with significant U.S. support, the Georgian Coast Guard is better equipped to patrol the country's maritime borders"³⁷.

While looking at both documents and trying to compare them, one can come to a conclusion that in the years of the apogee of the ISIS violent activities and active recruitment, Georgian government undertook some major steps in order to ensure security for its country and citizens on some level. The Georgian Government stresses out that the steps undertaken by them do not only concern the security of their own state but the whole region with its neighboring countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Turkey). According to the report the counterterrorist steps that the State of Georgia undertook in 2015 show that even in one-year period the Government had come up with new steps to strengthen the fight not only against the terrorist organizations themselves, but also against the recruitment of young Georgian citizens.

Conclusion

The study tried to analyze the special features of the ISIS recruitment processes that have been taking place in Georgia. The research included literature, press and media, and official documents. As the literature suggests there are two major ways to recruit: online

³⁷Chapter 2, Country Reports: Europe Overview, 2015, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/crt/2014/239406.htm>

and on ground. The process in Georgia includes both ways described in the literature. The online recruitment is considered to be the most effective in the matter numbers of people recruited, whereas the on ground recruitment, though being harder, is considered to be more efficient, since it leaves its effect in the roots.

Main incentives of the Georgian citizens from the region of Pankisi Gorge to join the ranks of ISIS are the following: feeling vulnerable as a minority under the rule of orthodox church, past experiences of fighting in the Chechen war, desire to become a hero and fight for justice, financial motives. These conclusions were made, based on both the press covered and the interviews that have been conducted with the locals by world's prominent news agencies.

Realizing the threat that the ISIS and its recruitment from Georgia represents, the Georgian government has been taking steps in order to at least reduce the number of people in the outflow towards the Daesh through the following means: annual reports to the US Department of State, participation in counterterrorism organizations, signing of treaties, raising the issue in the National Security Strategy document of the Republic of Georgia, etc.